

D R A F T



**USDA HUMAN PANDEMIC PLANNING
GUIDANCE
FOR
EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY
AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS**

May 3, 2006

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FOREWORD

How to use this Human Pandemic Planning Guidance

The “Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza” issued by the President’s Homeland Security Council requires, among other things, that Federal Departments prepare operations plans covering employee safety and health and continuity of operations.

USDA Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers will oversee the development of local operations plans for each field facility. The Human Pandemic Action Officers will also be asked to participate in the establishment of a headquarters operations plan.

Each Local Human Pandemic Coordinator is expected to develop a local operations plan which should cover information based on the planning guidance, any agency specific guidance, and any local requirements. Local operations plans should follow the seven Federal Government Response Stages (see appendix A to the planning guidance). The planning guidance uses the seven stages to show the different actions to be taken at each stage. Later stage activities build on work done at the early planning stages. For example, during the early stages, the activities are planning focused. During later stages, activities are action and recovery oriented.

To ensure a unified response in the National Capital Region, Departmental Administration’s Office of Operations will oversee the development of the local operations plan for headquarters locations with input from the Mission Areas and Staff Offices. In regard to the headquarters local plan, Human Pandemic Action Officers will need to develop internal communications strategies and, in conjunction with managers and employees, determine the business continuity strategies for their organizations.

The next section provides a synopsis of the USDA Human Pandemic Planning Guidance Checklists and Annexes.

Outline of the Human Pandemic Planning Guidance Checklists

Appendix B - Maintaining Essential Functions and Services

This appendix is designed to guide the USDA managers through the process of identifying and prioritizing their essential functions and services within their area of responsibility or facility to maintain business continuity. On March 10, the Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration requested that mission areas/staff offices begin a review of essential functions and services. This review is expected to be completed by organizations by May 15. Updated lists of essential functions and services should be shared with local planners so that local operations plans

can address support for the broad essential functions and the local essential functions and services that must be maintained during a human pandemic.

Target Audience:

Human Pandemic Action Officer - to guide internal development of operations plans to address the identified essential functions and services.

Local Human Pandemic Coordinator - to assist local managers in evaluating local essential functions and services for inclusion in the local operations plan.

Appendix C – Human Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Managers

This appendix has been prepared for local USDA managers to help address work force issues including safety and health associated with the planning for a pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees during a human pandemic.

Target Audience:

Human Pandemic Action Officer – in consultation with Mission Area/Staff Office Human Resources Directors, agency specific plans should be developed (using the format of the seven Stages for Federal Government Response) to supplement the appendix and distributed to Local Human Pandemic Coordinators and managers.

Local Human Pandemic Coordinator – incorporate any Mission Area/Staff Office information into the local operations plan and distribute to managers.

Appendix D – Human Pandemic Planning Guidance for USDA Facilities Managers

This appendix has been prepared for USDA facility managers to help address facility issues associated with the planning for a pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees and other occupants of facilities, whether USDA-owned or USDA-occupied. Facilities managers need to be prepared to support social distancing techniques and assure that the facilities provide a healthy workplace and are available and open for continuity of business.

Target Audience:

Human Pandemic Action Officer – In Headquarters, the facilities planning will be handled by Departmental Administration's Office of Operations, in conjunction with facilities contacts in leased space. Guidance in this appendix is primarily directed to the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator and onsite facilities managers.

Local Human Pandemic Coordinator – Using this annex as a guideline and working with the local facilities managers, a local operations plan must include a facilities section outlining actions to be taken at each of the seven Federal Government Response stages.

Appendix E – Communications with Employees and Stakeholders

This appendix suggests different ways to communicate and provides resources and references to assist in that effort. While there will be Department-wide communications going to all employees and regular communication with Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators, there must be plans in place to make sure each employee knows how to find current and accurate information in the event of a human pandemic.

Target Audience:

Human Pandemic Action Officers – Using this annex and working with your Public Affairs organization, plans must be developed to communicate internally and with key stakeholders.

Local Human Pandemic Coordinators – Working with local managers and any organization specific guidance, local operations plans must be developed to assure communication internally and with key stakeholders. Communications strategies at each of the Federal Government Response stages should be outlined.

Annex A – Support for the *National Response Plan*

This annex is an introduction to the *National Response Plan*, a document developed by the Department of Homeland Security and used to guide federal response in emergency situations. It could be possible that during a human pandemic, in addition to working for USDA business continuity, the Department could be called on to support the broader federal response. It is important that managers at all levels are aware of the *National Response Plan*.

Target Audience:

Human Pandemic Action Officers – This annex is available to be shared with managers to increase the awareness of the National Response Plan and the impact of implementing it.

Local Human Pandemic Coordinator – This annex is intended to be shared with local managers to assure managers are aware of the provisions of the *National Response Plan*. Local operations plans should include local procedures for handling requests for support by the Department of Homeland Security or other Departments should the *National Response Plan* be activated. Agency specific

guidance should also be used. Requests for USDA support come through the USDA Homeland Security Staff.

Annex B – USDA Employees and Family Members

This annex is being developed to assist USDA employees and their families in preparing for a human influenza pandemic. The intent is to provide a stand-alone document that can become a resource to employees to aid in their preparation, response and recovery.

Annex C – Test Training Exercise

USDA HUMAN PANDEMIC PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

USDA has been a vital part of the ongoing federal efforts to prepare for the possibility of a human influenza pandemic – a global outbreak of a new influenza virus that infects and can be transmitted between humans, and to which humans have little or no immunity. Because of the global nature of this threat, USDA planners are helping to get the USDA workplace more resilient to any potential outbreak of influenza that might occur in the United States.

Why the heightened concern now?

There is evidence that we are now at a greater risk for a pandemic. The current concern arises from the unprecedented outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza affecting birds in Asia since 1997 and that has continued to spread across bird populations in Asia, Europe, and Africa. This highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza strain has shown the capability to infect a variety of animal species as well as humans, although to date there has been no human-to-human transmission.

One characteristic of flu viruses is that they constantly mutate. In addition, new influenza viruses emerge, generally from the animal population. Animals and humans lack immunity to new strains of the virus. These facts mean that there are occasional “pandemics,” or major global outbreaks, that can affect major portions of the world’s population. The last three were in 1918, 1957, and 1968.

There is concern that the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza strain could mutate to a form that could be transmitted easily between people, although it is impossible to predict when, or if, that will happen. Nevertheless, the Federal Government, and USDA, must be fully prepared in case that does happen. In addition, while current avian influenza concerns prompted this planning guidance, the operation plans that result from this guidance will be applicable to any influenza pandemic.

On November 1, 2005, the President announced the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, which outlines the approach the Federal Government will take to prepare for and respond to a possible pandemic. The *Strategy* focuses Federal efforts on three pillars: (1) preparedness and communications; (2) surveillance and detection; and (3) response and containment.

To support the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, the White House Homeland Security Council developed the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*. This *Plan* provides comprehensive guidance for Federal, State, local and tribal governments, and private sector planning and response for an avian

influenza event. Among other things, the *Implementation Plan* directs that each Federal Department and agency must prepare its own operational plans focused on employee health and safety and preserving USDA's capability to perform its mission during a human pandemic.

(Note: The Department of Homeland Security is the lead Department for the *National Response Plan* which is separate from the pandemic specific plans mentioned above. The *National Response Plan* can be activated to orchestrate the Federal response to major domestic situations. USDA plays a key role in many aspects of the *National Response Plan*, therefore information on the *National Response Plan* is included in Annex A.)

2. PRINCIPLES GUIDING USDA'S PLANNING

With regard to employee safety and health, as well as continued provision of essential functions and services, USDA will use the following overarching principles as it prepares for and responds to a human pandemic outbreak:

- In a pandemic, **employee safety and health** and **business continuity** are USDA's primary concerns.
- The *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* (Homeland Security Council, November 2005) and the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* provide the framework for USDA planning.
- The seven pandemic stages identified in the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* will provide the framework for USDA actions. Each successive stage will trigger specific policies, procedures, and actions.
- USDA will support the *National Response Plan* (NRP) in the event that the Department of Health and Human Services requests NRP activation, or the Department of Homeland Security declares an "Incident of National Significance" due to a pandemic.
- In the event of a human pandemic, USDA's operation plans will delegate special human resources authorities to the local level to enable USDA managers to be flexible and creative in managing human capital and ensure continuity of essential functions and services while a pandemic is affecting their geographic area.
- USDA will maximize the use of technology to support business continuity and social distancing.
- USDA officials will coordinate closely with local partners, stakeholders, State and local governments, and health officials.

- USDA will provide its employees with information on pandemic influenza through regular communication using www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared as a primary resource.
- The Federal Government increasingly uses contractors for cost-effective commercial services that support its missions. USDA mission areas and agencies will ensure that their non-Federal service providers receive pandemic planning information and require contractors who provide support that is integral to the delivery of essential services to present a plan outlining how they will meet their contractual obligations during a pandemic.

3. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

(From the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*)

- Human pandemic influenza is likely to come in “waves” of several weeks to a few months in duration.
- The first wave is likely to be the most severe, as individuals will not have immunity and a targeted vaccine will not yet have been developed; subsequent waves will likely be less severe.
- Illness rates will be highest among school-aged children. At the height of the first pandemic wave, up to 40% of school-age children will contract the disease, and about 20% of adults will get sick.
- Some persons will become infected but may not develop clinically significant symptoms. Asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic individuals can transmit the infection and develop immunity to subsequent infection.
- At the height of the first human pandemic wave, up to 40% of employees may be absent for periods of approximately two weeks, as a result of their own illness, illness within their families, or fear of infection. There will be lower but still significant levels of absenteeism for several weeks on either side of the peak.
- Illness among the public and absenteeism in the private sector workforce will have a significant impact on essential functions and services needed by USDA customers, ability of USDA contractors to deliver goods and services, USDA’s ability to procure needed supplies, and distribution systems.
- A vaccine will not be available until at least 4 to 6 months after the pandemic virus appears and is isolated. The supply of antiviral drugs will be limited.
- Influenza is spread through droplets from an infected person. USDA planning must recognize that viral transmission occurs as much or more through touch (contact with contaminated objects) as through air dispersion (through coughing or sneezing).

- Persons contracting the virus will be infectious for a period of time before the onset of symptoms, during the illness, and for a period of time even after symptoms have disappeared. USDA will follow HHS guidance on medical issues and amend its actions as necessary based on new guidance.

4. DEFINITIONS

Avian Influenza (or “bird flu”) - an influenza virus subtype that infects birds. Avian viruses played a role in the last three human influenza pandemics in 1918, 1957, and 1968. They are considered a likely reservoir for emerging viruses that could trigger a pandemic.

Continuity of Operations Plans – plans to assure that essential operations can be performed in all-hazards scenarios. The term COOP evolved in the mid-1980s from a national security mission to ensure survivability and sustaining of the United States against all-hazards threats from enemy nation states. In 1998, Federal agencies were for the first time, required to develop COOP plans for essential operations for an all-hazards event from an alternate facility. The assumption in this generation of COOP plans is that agencies would move essential operations from the locale of the hazard to a safe place to operate.

Under a pandemic influenza scenario, a non-traditional approach to COOP planning is required. Both approaches require the identification of essential functions, succession plans, delegations of authority, communications protocols, and preserving vital records. However, with pandemic influenza COOP planning, alternate facilities will not be the answer, given the possibility that the pandemic is likely to be all across the country. Rather, techniques such as social distancing in the workplace and/or telecommuting need to be employed to maintain sufficient staff for service delivery during periods of high absenteeism. All USDA offices that deliver essential services are required to develop continuity plans to assure essential services can be delivered throughout the pandemic.

Epidemic – a pronounced clustering of cases of a disease within a short period of time.

Essential Employees – those employees identified as being necessary for the continued performance of essential functions and services. Agencies must inform employees identified as essential in advance, so that they can be prepared to support and sustain essential USDA functions and services during a pandemic. Essential employees are expected to remain in contact with their agencies during any emergency.

Essential Functions and Services – those critical functions that enable USDA, at each organizational level, to provide vital services; maintain the safety and well being of the general public; sustain the agricultural economic base; protect the nations' food supply; deliver federal nutrition assistance programs; support social order and well-being; and meet national and international responsibilities in a national emergency.

When identifying essential functions and services, program managers should take into account collaborative relationships with state and local governments, industry partners, stakeholders, and other Federal departments. Program managers should take into account the time of the year that a discrete service must be provided, or a discrete function performed, to support overall program delivery requirements.

Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza – a plan published by the White House Homeland Security Council that provides comprehensive guidance for Federal, State, local and tribal governments, and private sector planning and response. Among other things, the *Implementation Plan* directs that each Federal Department and agency must prepare its own operational plans focused on employee health and safety and preserving USDA’s capability to perform its mission during a human pandemic.

Influenza (human) – a viral respiratory disease spread mainly by tiny droplets that are released when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Seasonal flu outbreaks occur most often in late fall and winter. Once people have been infected by a certain strain of flu, they develop immunity. However, with many different types of flu virus circulating around the world, each year the world may be faced with new strains causing seasonal flu. The flu virus continually changes, mutates, and evolves into new forms.

Human Capital Plan – a plan required by the President’s Management Agenda, this plan guides USDA towards improvements in human capital. As part of the development of this plan, USDA human resources staffs have determined mission critical job series and evaluated flexibilities.

Local Human Pandemic Operations Plan – a plan prepared by each USDA location outlining local preparedness, response and recovery in accordance with the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*.

Mission Critical Facility – a designation given to certain USDA facilities based on a mission review and other security evaluations.

Mission Critical Position – a designation given to certain job series requiring increased attention to staffing and recruiting as part of the Human Capital Plan development under the President’s Management Agenda.

National Response Plan – this plan, developed under the leadership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, establishes a comprehensive all-hazards approach to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents. USDA has both lead and support responsibilities under this plan. Should an “Incident of National Significance” be declared during a pandemic, USDA would take on responsibilities that support the broader federal response (<http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/NRPbaseplan.pdf>).

National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza – a plan developed by the Homeland Security Council outlines the approach the Federal Government will take to prepare for and respond to a pandemic (www.pandemicflu.gov).

Pandemic – a worldwide epidemic.

Pandemic Influenza – a worldwide outbreak of a new influenza virus that infects and can be transmitted between humans, and to which humans have little or no immunity.

Phase – as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is defined as periods before and during a pandemic that are linked to characteristics of a new influenza virus and its spread through the population. The six WHO phases represent a starting point for discussion of Government action. See Appendix A.

Quarantine – an action placed in effect by local health authorities that places restrictions on people and their movement in and out of a home, a neighborhood, a community, or other geographical designation. During a human pandemic influenza, a quarantine could be a tool used by local officials to prevent further spreading of a disease.

Social Distancing – an infection control strategy that reduces the duration, frequency, or intimacy of social contacts in order to limit the transmission of influenza. Social distancing may include, for example, increased use of telework, placing employees on shifts, use of face masks, closing offices or buildings, and canceling of large gatherings.

Stage – as defined in the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, are periods before and during a pandemic that are linked to actions that should be taken during pandemic planning, response and recovery. There are seven Federal government response “Stages” (0 to 6) of an outbreak in terms of the immediate and specific threat to the U.S. population. Progressively higher stages trigger specific actions. See Appendix A.

Telework – working at locations other than the workplace, such as an employee’s home or at a telework center, using telecommunications.

Wave – a period during which an outbreak of pandemic influenza occurs within a specific community or a larger geographic area. Waves include periods of time of rapid increase of disease occurrence, peak occurrence, and decline toward more normal levels. Waves can last several weeks to several months. An influenza pandemic would be expected to occur in several waves.

5. USDA ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Secretary/Deputy Secretary of Agriculture – Designate a USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator; approve waivers or special human capital authorities as necessary to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of essential functions and services.

USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator – The Assistant Secretary for Administration has been appointed by the Deputy Secretary to be the Department’s focal point for issues related to a human pandemic. The Coordinator will lead USDA efforts to develop USDA human pandemic operations plans to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of essential functions and services.

In support of the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator role, the Assistant Secretary for Administration establishes policies, facilitates coordination among the USDA Mission Areas related to the response to a human pandemic, and provides special delegations of authority needed to empower local managers to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of operations and serves as executive liaison to the Office of Personnel Management. The Assistant Secretary for Administration will implement the Incident Command System to plan and manage a headquarters human pandemic incident.

Subcabinet members – Exercise line authority for protecting employee safety and health and the continuity of essential functions and services. The Subcabinet will provide leadership for human pandemic planning by appointing Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators (if applicable) and overseeing the development of operations plans. In the event of a human pandemic, the Subcabinet will ensure essential functions are continued.

Departmental Administration Offices – the Assistant Secretary for Administration acting as the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator is supported by the following Departmental Administration offices:

Director, Office of Human Capital Management (Deputy USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator) – Supports the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator by developing policies on human resources flexibilities to facilitate implementation of human pandemic operations plans; requests any necessary waivers or additional delegations necessary from U.S. Office of Personnel Management for employee compensation; delegates authorities as necessary to support local operations; serves as resource on leave, hours of work, compensation, and safety and health issues.

Director, Office of Operations (Deputy USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator) – Supports the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator by serving as Local Human Pandemic Coordinator for all USDA Headquarters locations; operates the Incident Command System for headquarters emergency programs including human pandemic planning and response; directs operations of USDA

Operations Center and provides timely updates and guidance for USDA personnel through the employee emergency information “BePrepared” web site (www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared).

Director, Office of Procurement and Property Management (Deputy USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator) – Coordinates COOP activities in support of human pandemic planning. Facilitates procurement policies necessary to implement the USDA human pandemic plans.

Office of Communications – Works with the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator to develop external communications concerning human pandemic influenza; provides support and technical expertise in reviewing internal (employee) communications going to all employees.

Office of the Chief Information Officer – Leverages technology to support implementation of the operations plans and develops plans for maintaining information technology (IT) operations during periods of high absenteeism. Expedites consideration of any needed IT waivers, provides technology support for special or altered business operations during a pandemic; provides guidance to employees on IT security measures in connection with expanded telework; facilitates corporate planning and communications with mission area IT leadership to sustain technology operations during a human pandemic.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer – Provides guidance and direction to ensure continuity of payroll and time and attendance systems.

Office of the General Counsel – Provides legal advice concerning any waivers, regulatory changes, or temporary modifications in the way USDA manages its human capital and accomplishes its essential functions and services during a human pandemic.

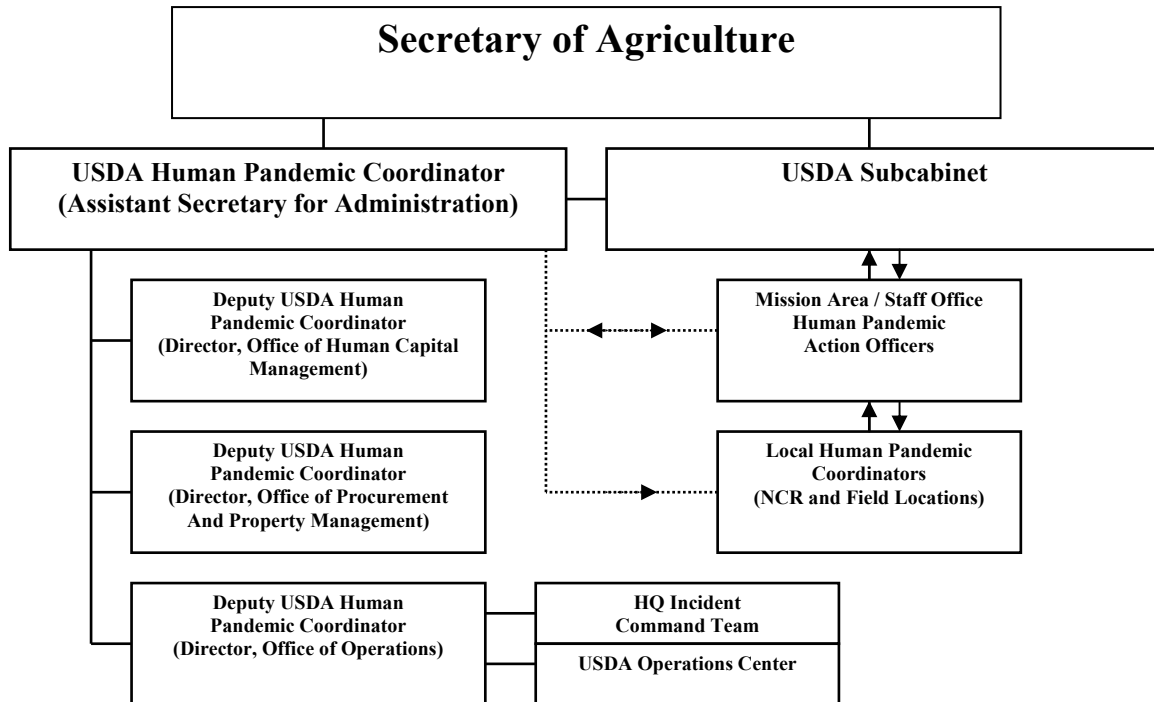
Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officer – A senior USDA official named to work with the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator to assure local operations plans are developed and in place that focus on employee safety and health and continuity of business.

Local Human Pandemic Coordinator – Coordinates preparedness, response and recovery for local USDA facilities; uses planning guidance provided to develop local plan to be used in conjunction with the local Occupant Emergency Plans; coordinates with stakeholders and local governments; exercises delegated authorities to protect employee safety and health and ensure continuity of essential functions and services.

Individual Employees/Families – Stay informed and be prepared. Employees should take common sense steps to stop the spread of the flu virus. Employees and their family members with computers should immediately bookmark - both on their work and home computers - www.pandemicflu.gov for up-to-date information on the disease, how to

prevent its spread, and how to treat it; and www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/ for USDA updates and information; these two web sites will be key conduits for information before, during and after a pandemic.

Human Pandemic Command and Control Structure (Operation Mode)



6. USDA PLANNING ACTION ITEMS

No.	Action	Responsible Party	Date (2006)
STAGES 0/1/2: HUMAN PANDEMIC ALERT PERIOD			
1	Issue initial planning guidance for USDA on pandemic influenza	Assistant Secretary for Administration	March 10
2	Assistant Secretary for Administration appointed USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator	Deputy Secretary	April 13
3	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator requests Subcabinet to appoint Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators	Assistant Secretary for Administration	April 14
4	Name Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers	Subcabinet	April 21

5	Name Local Human Pandemic Coordinators	All mission areas, agencies and staff offices with field locations	April 28
6	First meeting with Human Pandemic Action Officers to discuss planning guidance for operational use at USDA facilities.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator	May 3
7	Second meeting with Human Pandemic Action Officers.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator	May 10
8	Mission Areas and Staff Offices will complete review of essential functions that began with March 10 memorandum and update Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan to reflect the changes.	Subcabinet	May 15
9	Mission Area, Staff Office and field locations will complete Human Pandemic Operations Plans.	Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers	June 1
10	Human Pandemic Action Officers will certify to the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator that Mission Area, Staff Office and field location plans are in place.	Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers	June 15
11	Practice implementation of USDA Plans	All levels	Monthly
STAGE 3: WIDESPREAD HUMAN OUTBREAKS IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS OVERSEAS			
1	Place all USDA offices on pandemic alert status and prepare to implement human pandemic operations plans.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator	
2	Ensure that local operations plans are complete, instructions are provided to all employees, essential functions and services are defined, essential employee delegations and three-deep designations are in place, employee communications systems are in place, and communications systems with local government and health authorities are in place.	Local Human Pandemic Coordinators	

STAGE 4: FIRST HUMAN CASE IN NORTH AMERICA		
1	Activate pandemic operations plans and implement social distancing practices.	Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
2	Communicate with employees to keep them informed of progress of the pandemic and remind them of health guidelines and steps they should take to protect themselves and their families.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator; Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
3	Update www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/ website daily with USDA status.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator
STAGE 5: SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES		
1	Track and report employee absenteeism and death rates on a regular basis to the USDA Operations Center.	Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers; Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
2	Report on mission capable status of USDA Mission Critical Facilities, on a regular basis.	Mission Critical Facility Supervisors
3	Track and report employee absenteeism and death rates on a regular basis. Report to the Subcabinet and Secretary.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator
4	Coordinate with State and local officials, local health officials, Federal Executive Boards, partners and stakeholders in implementing local Plan; implement measures to ensure continuity of essential functions and services.	Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
STAGE 6: RECOVERY AND PREPARATION FOR SUBSEQUENT WAVES		
1	Assess impact on USDA operations on previous pandemic wave and report through Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers to USDA Operations Center.	Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
2	Compile reports on impact and report to the Subcabinet and Secretary	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator
3	Survey and compile lists of employees who were infected in the first wave and recovered (thus acquiring immunity in subsequent waves).	Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
4	Adjust local plans based on knowledge gained and lessons learned.	Local Human Pandemic Coordinators
5	Adjust three-deep designations of essential employees based on employee health status.	USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator; Local Human Pandemic Coordinators

Appendix A

World Health Organization (WHO) Global Pandemic Phases and the Stages for Federal Government Response

WHO PHASES		Federal Government Response Stages	
INTER-PANDEMIC PERIOD			
1	No new influenza subtypes detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human disease is considered low.	0	New domestic animal outbreak in at-risk country
2	No new influenza subtypes detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.		
PANDEMIC ALERT PERIOD			
3	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.	0	New domestic animal outbreak in at-risk country
		1	Suspected human outbreak overseas
4	Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.	2	Confirmed human outbreak overseas
5	Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).		
PANDEMIC PERIOD			
6	Pandemic phase: increased and sustained transmission in general population.	3	Widespread human outbreaks in multiple locations overseas
		4	First human case in North America
		5	Spread throughout United States
		6	Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves

- As defined in the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*

**** It is the policy of the Federal Government to accelerate preparedness efforts prior to WHO Phase 4, and to initiate pandemic response actions at Phase 4, when epidemiological evidence of two generations of human-to-human transmission of a new influenza virus is documented anywhere in the world.**

Appendix B

MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

This appendix will guide the users through the process of identifying and prioritizing essential functions and services within their mission responsibility or facility to maintain business continuity. It also provides ideas for addressing those essential functions and services that are vulnerable to disruption in the face of a human influenza pandemic.

By May 15, 2006, mission areas and agencies will examine and redefine if required, their essential functions in the context of the human pandemic which may span a period of up to nine months. Local Human Pandemic Coordinators will use the redefined functions to develop plans to maintain essential functions at the local level.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (Outlined in Stages)

STAGES 0/1/2: Human Pandemic Alert Period - Planning and Readiness

Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should work with managers to:

- Develop plans and procedures for continuation of functions and services through human pandemic events. Plans and procedures should extend beyond essential functions identified for COOP which were predicated on continuing operations for 30 days as the human pandemic is likely to span many months.
- Consider seasonal essential services and develop strategies to execute these services.
- Identify mission essential personnel and ensure redundancy in employee skills and knowledge by cross-training.
- Prioritize services and functions to ensure continued delivery in the event employee absenteeism reaches 40 percent.
- Develop and prioritize functions and services and identify those that can be performed by social distancing techniques versus those that must be performed on site.
- Require contractors, who provide support that is integral to your delivery of essential services, to present a plan to you on how they will meet their contractual obligations during a human pandemic.
- Develop tracking system to monitor employee illness and absenteeism during stages 4 through 6 and prepare to report to the USDA Operations Center.
- Identify personnel and equipment required to perform services and ensure redundancy.

- Develop delegations of authority and orders of succession that are at least three deep to take into account the expected rate of absenteeism.
- Plan for geographical dispersion of delegations of authority and orders of succession, taking into account the regional nature of an outbreak.
- Disseminate delegation and succession information to local and headquarters staff.
- Identify records needed to sustain operations for more than 30 days and ensure records can be accessed electronically from remote locations or provide hard copies.
- Identify and plan for maintenance of vital systems that rely on periodic physical intervention/servicing.
- Identify and test critical systems that support connectivity internally and to key stakeholders.
- Test and exercise social distancing techniques, including telework capabilities to address impacts of a reduced staff on facilities and essential services. Develop detailed guidance for geographically rotating essential services, operations and leadership as applicable (see delegations and successions.)
- Identify stakeholders to include other federal departments and agencies (D/As), local, state, and tribal authorities. Invite stakeholders to participate in tests.
- Develop plans to resume all business activities.

STAGE 3: Widespread outbreaks in multiple locations overseas –

Human Pandemic Period

There is no way to forecast where the human pandemic will originate. If the first widespread cases of human to human transmission occur in the United States, this stage will be by-passed and any actions will have to be performed as rapidly as possible in stages 4 or 5. If the first cases occur overseas, most models and literature suggest that it will likely arrive in the United States within 4 to 6 weeks.

Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should work with managers to:

- Test local human pandemic operations plans, to include social distancing, and revise as needed.
- Review and ensure staff can perform services.
- Verify delegations of authority and orders of succession.
- Test interoperable communications both internally and with stakeholders.
- Test telework impact on internal network and telecommunications systems.
- Update all vital records and databases (including all pre-deployed vital records and databases).

- Conduct training to ensure capability to perform essential functions and services.
- Test Employee Tracking System and revise as needed.
- Test procedures for each location to prepare and disseminate status of mission operations.
- Begin to track local USDA leadership.
- Review and revise reconstitution capabilities as needed.

STAGE 4: First human case in North America.

The relevance of this stage is partially dependent on where the first cases appear. If it occurs in your area, you are essentially in stage 5. The pace at which the human pandemic spreads is dependent to some degree on where it first occurs. If it happens in an area that is a major transportation hub, it will likely spread rapidly. Conversely, if it happens in an isolated rural area, you may have a little more planning time. However, the dynamics of the Spanish Flu human pandemic suggests that once it occurs within the United States, it is likely to spread across the country within 1 month.

Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should prepare to:

- Execute human pandemic plans and implement social distancing procedures.
- Coordinate implementation with USDA Headquarters, other D/A's, state, local, tribal entities and territories.
- Daily report on mission capable status of USDA facilities and the ability to perform essential functions and services.
- Daily track employee attendance and report to the USDA Operations Center as required.
- Activate delegations and orders of succession as needed.
- Monitor telework impact on internal network and telecommunications system.
- Continue to track leadership/successors.
- Maintain daily contact with other geographical sites who can back up your essential services if needed.
- Verify reconstitution capabilities.

STAGE 5: Spread throughout United States.

The human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities and alert the Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officer.

Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should:

- Daily report on mission capable status of USDA facilities and the ability to perform essential functions and services.
- Daily track employee attendance and report as required.
- Execute as defined by plans and refine as necessary.
- Activate delegations and orders of succession as needed.
- Monitor telework impact on internal network and telecommunications system. Continue updating as necessary.
- Continue to track leadership/successors.
- Maintain daily contact with other geographical sites.
- Verify reconstitution capabilities.

STAGE 6 - Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves.

A human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave.

Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should take the lead to:

- Implement business recovery/resumption plans.
- Assess any damage to facilities/infrastructure.
- Replace personnel as needed and conduct training as required.
- Continue tracking employee absenteeism and test communications.
- Assess impact on essential services and adjust plans based on knowledge gained and lessons learned.
- Update delegations and orders of succession as needed.
- Monitor telework impact on internal network and telecommunications system. Continue updating as necessary.
- Conduct training to ensure continued capability to perform essential functions and services.
- Continue to track leadership/successors.

- Maintain daily contact with other geographical sites.
- Execute reconstitution plans. Review plans and adjust as required to prepare for the next wave.
- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic influenza and actions taken; secure all properties and records.

Appendix C

HUMAN PANDEMIC PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

1. PURPOSE

This planning guidance has been prepared for Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers, Local Human Pandemic Coordinators, Human Resources Directors and managers to help address work force issues associated with the planning for a human pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees and the performance of essential functions.

This appendix encompasses the following areas:

- Planning and readiness
- Designating emergency personnel
- Dismissal and closure procedures
- Status of non-emergency personnel
- Sample guidelines for communicating with employees
- Methods of employee communications
- Employee awareness of changes in building operations
- Pay and Staffing flexibilities

Section 1: Telework Capability Questionnaire, provides questions to determine the current telework capability of critical employees and to prepare them for teleworking.

Section 2: Personnel Tracking, provides guidance/samples in the development of specific tracking issues that managers should address in preparedness for an influenza human pandemic.

Section 3: Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options, provides a synopsis of authorities and alternatives available in developing contingency staffing plans.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (Outlined in Stages)

STAGES 0/1/2: Human Pandemic Alert Period - Planning and Readiness

Each USDA location is responsible to design, update, and carry out plans to take into account and respond to the human pandemic influenza threat that USDA employees are most likely to face. These plans interact with and impact human capital management. USDA Managers should be familiar with the many human capital resources and flexibilities that exist to assist managers and employees in an emergency. With leadership from Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators, managers should work with Human Resources staff to:

- Identify essential functions that must continue to be performed to support Department/Agency identified services during a human pandemic. Note that these functions may vary by time of year. See USDA human pandemic influenza Appendix B, “Maintaining Essential Functions and Services.”
- Identify and designate primary and alternate personnel critical to support Department/Agency essential functions during a human pandemic. These designations should be “three deep.”
- Inform these critical personnel in writing that they could be requested to work during periods when non-essential personnel are not working in order to perform essential functions either from their normal work location or from an alternate work location via telework. Attach this documentation to their telework agreement.
- Ensure critical personnel have the capability to telework from their home or an alternate work place. See Section 1 “Telework Capability Questionnaire.”
- Create a notification roster with the names/phone numbers (office, home, cell, Blackberry, pager, etc) of critical personnel and their alternates. Test the call notification procedures at least monthly.
- Create a similar notification roster of non-critical personnel so that they can be contacted during the course of a human pandemic and apprised of the latest information as it relates to their health, work status and resumption of normal operations as well as being told to report for work or remain at home.
- Plan to account for all employees, determine their work status and to relay information regarding status of the workplace. See Section 2 “Personnel Tracking.”
- Designate backup Time and Attendance (T&A) personnel and ensure that both primary and backup personnel have the capability to process T&A’s from an alternative work location.
- Conduct exercises simulating a human pandemic influenza in your area. Include critical personnel, local health authorities, local service providers and contract personnel in these exercises.
- Ensure that representatives of local bargaining units (unions), local service providers, employees with special needs, personnel with disabilities, and contractor personnel are included in your planning process.
- Arrange to provide employee benefits counseling and processing without direct contact between the employees and the benefits counselors (e.g., email, phone, etc.).
- Focus on positive reinforcement of roles among your employees as the approach to ensuring that critical personnel report to worksite.

- Communicate how, and how often, employees are expected to remain in contact with their supervisor during any closure situation.
- Inform employees that in the event of a human pandemic of short duration they might be instructed not to report to work.
- Agencies in Washington, DC should follow the “Washington, DC Area Dismissal or Closure Procedures” or USDA specific information published on www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared.
- Work closely with your servicing personnel officer as there are no fixed solutions that will automatically apply to all situations.
- Encourage employees to familiarize themselves with government wide and local preparations for and mitigation of human pandemic influenza (www.humanpandemicflu.gov), USDA specific employee information (www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared), and the information that is available in “*A Federal Employee’s Emergency Guide*,” at the OPM Web site (www.opm.gov).
- Distribute copies of USDA’s “Human Pandemic Planning Checklist for USDA Employees and Family Members” to all employees, when available.
- Advise employees of support services available through agency Employee Assistance Programs.

Activities specific to Local Human Pandemic Coordinators:

- Plan to use the building public address system, closed circuit television system or agency intranet to keep employees informed and updated.
- Establish and disseminate written procedures for dismissal or closure to employees.
- Other metropolitan areas should coordinate dismissals or closures with Federal Executive Boards where available.
- Coordinate with local health and or government officials who are responsible for establishing local quarantine policies.
- Consider the following activities to support communications with employees:
 - Convening town hall type meetings with subject matter experts in attendance to make presentations and answer questions.
 - Solicit employee comments and suggestions on your human pandemic planning.

STAGE 3: Widespread outbreaks in multiple locations overseas – Human Pandemic Period

There is no way to forecast where the human pandemic will originate. If the first widespread cases of human to human transmission occur in the United States, this stage will be by-passed and any actions will have to be performed as rapidly as possible in stages 4 or 5. If the first cases occur overseas, it could arrive in the United States within 4 to 6 weeks. In addition to preparations taken in Stages 0-2, Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should:

- Review plans and commence intensive information campaign with employees.
- Contact potential hire/re-hire candidate pool and ascertain availability and willingness.
- Complete arrangements and/or procurements to enable extended telework capability.

STAGE 4: First human case in North America

The relevance of this stage is partially dependent on where the first cases appear. If it occurs in your area, you are essentially in stage 5. The pace at which the human pandemic spreads is dependent to some degree on where it first occurs. If it happens in an area that is a major transportation hub, it could spread rapidly. Conversely, if it happens in an isolated rural area, you may have a little more planning time. However, the dynamics of the Spanish Flu human pandemic suggests that once it occurs within the United States, it is likely to spread across the country within 1 month. At this point, Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators must:

- Continue final arrangements to enable implementation of plans developed in Stages 0-2.
- Update personnel on the status of the human pandemic. Note that the USDA web site (www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared) will have daily updates on the spread of the influenza and guidance from USDA Headquarters.
- The Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Homeland Security will have the lead on implementation of the NRP.

STAGE 5: Spread throughout United States

A human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead on implementing local procedures from local government and health authorities. Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should take the lead to:

- Communicate with local health authorities to determine if and when it will be appropriate to recall additional personnel to work at their normal worksite or at an alternate worksite if a human pandemic continues.
- Follow dismissal or closure procedures as recommended by local health authorities or as announced by the agency, Department of Agriculture, or Office of Personnel Management. In metropolitan areas, coordinate with local Federal Executive Boards.
- Should unexpected circumstances occur during the course of responding to a human pandemic in order to carry out essential functions, be prepared to take prudent actions. At some reasonable point in time after the action is taken, provide the union notice and meet any bargaining obligation post-implementation.
- Disseminate information to employees about local human pandemic preparedness and response plans and procedures—including deviations as necessary from normal operating procedures.
- Institute flexible work hours, shifts, and telework as appropriate to maximize social distancing and decrease the potential to spread the virus. Requirement for telework agreements is waived at this stage for newly designated teleworkers.
- Grant administrative leave for sick employees as required. Authority for extended administrative leave may be granted depending on the severity/duration of the human pandemic. See Section 3 on Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options
- Fill critical needs in accordance with your hiring plan. Keep your higher level organization informed of inabilities to keep your facility open or accomplish your essential functions.
- New hires (those holding low risk, non-sensitive positions) may commence work without a background check. However, you will need to request a National Agency Check Inquiries (NACI) no later than 14 calendar days after appointment.
- See Section 3 “Hiring Flexibilities and Pay Options” and consider one or more of the following to fill critical staffing needs:
 - Excepted appointments
 - Reemploying Annuitant
 - Reemploying Buyout Recipients
 - Existing Direct-Hire Authority for certain permanent positions
 - Direct-Hire Authority
 - Contracting with a temporary employment firm
 - Contract with former employees via personal services contracts
 - Competitive service appointments of 120 days or less

- Consider one or more of the following pay options when necessary to continue essential functions and services:
 - Overtime pay
 - Lifting the bi-weekly premium pay limitation

STAGE 6: Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves

The human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave.
Mission

Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators should:

- Develop and maintain list of lessons learned of actions taken in this and previous stages for evaluation when discussing preparations for the next wave.
- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic and actions taken; secure all properties and records.
- In the absence of higher level guidance, the Field Facility Manager is authorized to initiate reasonable and prudent responses necessary to continue operations at his/her facility.
- Commence hiring actions to backfill personnel lost in a human pandemic.
- Conduct training as required. Review efficacy of plans and adjust as required to prepare for the next wave.

Section 1

TELEWORK CAPABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Managers and supervisors have the authority to permit employees to telework in an emergency situation even if no formal agreement is in place. However all employees should be asked the following questions to determine their current telework capability and to prepare critical employees for teleworking:

- Do you telework (either regularly or occasionally)?
- Do you currently have a telework agreement in place?
- Are you designated a Mission Critical/Emergency employee?
- Do you have a personal computer at home?
- Do you have a government-furnished computer at home?
- Do you have a government owned computer with broadband access that you could use at home?
- Have you been issued a government Blackberry or other wireless email device (i.e. Treo)?
- Do you have internet access at home (DSL, Satellite or Cable)?
- Are you currently able to access your official email from home?
- If you currently telework from home, do you use the computer to access sensitive data?
- If you telework, have you completed the computer security training required by DM-3525-003?
- Do you currently telework from an equipped telework center?
- What equipment would you need to continue working from your home during a human influenza pandemic; e.g. laptop, fax, printer, phone card, internet provider, etc.?

Section 2

Personnel Tracking

Managers and supervisors should account for their employees during all seven stages of a human pandemic:

- Gather as much contact information for your employees as possible (e.g. office, home, cell, pager, email, etc.). Be sure your next higher level of management also has this information.
- Notify employees to keep contact information (supervisor's work and home phone numbers) in a prominent place where family members can find it in order to report employee illness.
- Supervisors should initiate a follow up for any unscheduled employee absence.
- Supervisors should follow up with sick employees at least weekly to ensure they are receiving proper medical care.
- If supervisors become ill, employee tracking becomes the responsibility of the next higher level of management.
- Location managers should maintain a running count of employees who are at home either caring for family members or who are ill themselves. This information should be passed to higher organizational levels at least weekly or as requested.

Section 3

HIRING FLEXIBILITIES AND PAY OPTIONS

Most of these authorities are presently available to USDA managers and are flexibilities that could be used during all seven stages of pandemic preparedness, response and recovery. Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers will be notified should authority levels be modified for use during later levels of a human pandemic.

Authorities requiring approval from the Director, Office of Human Capital Management, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Office of Personnel Management, will be pre-positioned by the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator for expedited approval.

ITEM	STATUS/COMMENTS
Excused Absence (Extended Leave)	The Secretary of Agriculture has authority to grant extended administrative leave.
Emergency Leave Transfer Program	The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) can approve establishment of Department-wide programs to solicit donations for future distribution to affected employees.
Overtime Pay	Agencies have authority to pay overtime. Departmental Administrations' Office of Human Capital Management has authority to waive the bi-weekly maximum pay limitation.
Hazardous Duty Pay/Environmental Differential	Agencies have authority to determine if hazardous duty pay for general schedule employees and environmental differential pay for prevailing rate (wage grade) employees is warranted due to exposure to hazards, physical hardships, or working conditions of an unusually severe nature.
Emergency Critical Hiring	Agencies may make 30-day appointments in the excepted service to fill a critical hiring need. These appointments may be extended for an additional 30 days. CTAP, RPL and ICTAP requirements do not apply to these appointments.

Direct-Hire Authority	<p>Agencies may use current OPM direct hire authority to make competitive service, career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments, as appropriate. In all cases, agencies must adhere to the public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330 and all ICTAP requirements. Eligible positions in USDA are:</p> <p>Veterinary Medical Officer, GS-701-9 / GS-13 Animal Health Technician, GS-704-2 / GS-10 Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer, GS-436-5 / GS-13 Plant Protection and Quarantine Aid/Technician, GS-421-2 -5 / GS-7 General Biological Science, GS-401-9 / GS-13 Biological Science Technician, GS-404-2 / GS-7 Microbiologist, GS-403-9 / GS-13 Entomologist, GS-414-9 / GS-13 Botanist, GS-430-9 / GS-13 Plant Pathologist, GS-434-9 / GS-13 Ecologist, GS-408-9 / GS-13 Chemist, GS-1320-9 / GS-13</p>
Temporary Employment Firms	Agencies may contract with private sector temporary employment firms for 120 days to meet emergency staffing needs. Contracts extensions beyond 120 days are subject to displaced employee procedures.
120 Day or Less Competitive Appointments	Agencies may make competitive appointments for 120 days or less without clearing CTAP and ICTAP. However, use of this program <u>may</u> identify one or more well-qualified displaced federal employees who are available for immediate employment.
Re-Employment Listing (RPL)	Agencies have authority to select current and former employees from the RPL for temporary, term, or permanent competitive service appointments.
Telework	Agencies may authorize employees to telework from an alternative worksite (home, satellite office, Telework Center) one or more days a week. Requirement for telework agreement waived at Stage 5.
Contract Personnel	Agencies must schedule a National Agency Check Inquiries (NACI) no later than 14 calendar days after an individual begins work under the contract, but only if the duties are designated as low-risk, non sensitive from a national security standpoint.
Re-employing Annuitants (with salary offset)	Agencies have this authority.
Re-employing Annuitants (without salary offset)	The Department must request this authority from OPM.

Rehiring Retirees or Others who Left the Government via a Buyout.	The Department must request this authority from OPM.
Temporary Emergency Needs Appointments (up to 1 year)	The Department must request this authority from OPM.
SES Limited – Term Emergency Appointments	The Department must request this authority from OPM.

Note: In the above chart, Agencies refers to USDA Mission Areas, Staff Offices, and Agencies.

Appendix D

USDA FACILITIES MANAGERS

1. PURPOSE:

This Annex has been prepared for USDA facility managers and their staffs to help address facility issues associated with the planning for a human pandemic and mitigation of the effects on USDA employees and other occupants of facilities, whether USDA-owned, or USDA-leased and privately managed. Each facility manager should closely coordinate with the Local Human Pandemic Influenza Coordinator. Additionally, procedures for the facility manager may vary depending on whether the facility is USDA-owned, or GSA-leased and privately managed. A USDA facility manager may be a mission area or staff office program manager, who has the same responsibility to mitigate the effects of a human pandemic on occupants of USDA facilities, including privately controlled space.

Social distancing is a key principle in operational planning for a human pandemic. The human resource is critical to the continuity of essential functions and services, but it is also the most vulnerable to a human pandemic. Social distancing involves infection control measures that reduce the duration, frequency, or intimacy of social contacts to limit the transmission of influenza. Each USDA facility manager should include social distancing strategies while managing each respective facility. For example, social distancing may include increased use of telework, placing employees on shifts, use of face masks, closing offices or buildings, and canceling of large gatherings. Social distancing strategies have been incorporated into the following set of checklists.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (Outlined in Stages)

STAGES 0/1/2: Human Pandemic Alert Period - Planning and Readiness

Facilities managers should do the following steps:

- Identify your Local Human Pandemic Coordinator(s), as designated by occupant USDA mission area or staff office.
- Establish a Facility Pandemic Planning Coordination Team, led by the facility manager and responsible for developing a facility operating plan. The facility plan is a sub-set to the local operations plans developed by the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator. Include the following, as applicable to your situation (facility manager or program manager in privately owned space):
 - Local Human Pandemic Coordinator
 - Local/community health and safety representatives (e.g., emergency management, public health, fire, and police)
 - USDA occupant emergency program representative(s) (if you are not the program manager)
 - Landlord representative/property management

- Police/Security staff (if not furnished by landlord)
 - Safety/Occupational staff (if not furnished by landlord)
 - Housekeeping staff (if not furnished by landlord)
 - Receptionists/Clerks/Telephone Operators staff
 - Other support staff, as necessary
- Review lessons learned if captured during past participation in emergency responses and the experiences of your local staff from other major emergencies and disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina.
- Identify facility functions or services that are vulnerable to disruption by high absenteeism. Include special use areas of the facility, if applicable:
 - Day care center
 - Fitness center
 - Cafeteria and other food services
 - Health unit
 - Prioritize the vulnerabilities and develop contingency strategies accordingly, to mitigate impact of absenteeism running as high as 40 percent. (See Appendix B)
- Review logistical support to keep buildings and facilities open:
 - If your facility is a complex of buildings, determine whether functions and services can be transferred between buildings to provide greater separation of personnel and/or consolidation of equipment and supplies for more efficient managing and securing of assets (e.g., IT servers).
 - Identify necessary support staff to maintain the facility.
 - Locate current, online (to ensure it remains current) local health guidance for the operation of facilities and the safety of employees.
 - Prioritize sanitation/custodial services and supplies (cleaning agents, disinfectants, etc.); assume that all services (e.g., custodial) will have the same peak 40-percent absenteeism rate.
 - Determine which facilities functions and services are critical and must be done. Determine which functions and services can be put aside. Don't forget emergency response and statutorily required program functions. (See Annex A, on Maintaining Essential Functions and Services, for additional guidance.)
 - HVAC systems should not require any special handling, since HVAC systems have not been shown to promote the spread of virus organisms.
- Identify special equipment and supplies (masks, antiseptic solutions, hand gel sanitizer, gloves)
 - Determine alternate source(s) for critical supplies (assume suppliers' being unable to provide supplies during a human pandemic).
 - Revise inventories, as necessary, to maintain a 3-month stock of essential supplies, including: soap, paper towels, toiletries, hygiene items, anti-septic wipes, cleaners (alcohol-based, since anti-bacterial-based are not effective against viruses).

- Establish protocols for sanitizing work areas.
 - Evaluate the practicality of setting up hand wash/sanitizing stations at all entrances to the facility and food service areas.
 - Plan security measures to protect the integrity and safety of structures, employees/visitors, equipment, and supplies.
- Identify and plan for maintenance of vital systems that rely on periodic physical intervention/servicing (e.g., HVAC systems, elevators, plumbing, security systems, etc.).
- At the direction of the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator, implement Social Distancing guidance (see Annex B, for employees and family members for additional information on practices/considerations).
 - Educate employees/visitors in social distancing (don't shake hands, keep your distance; don't share cell phones, office phones, pens, etc.).
 - Plan for telework and shift work for facility staff.
 - Start education of staff in Social Distancing practices.
 - Consult <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> for useful information on Pandemic Influenza and <http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/> for USDA employee information, including Pandemic Influenza.
- Develop a listing (include name, address, phone and fax numbers) of emergency services and share with your Local Human Pandemic Coordinator. Include:
 - Police Department (local/neighbor cities)
 - Sheriff's Department (local/neighbor counties)
 - Fire Department (local/regional)
 - Paramedic/Rescue Squads (city/county)
 - Air Ambulance (local/regional)
 - Hospitals (local/regional/Veterans)
 - Urgent Care Facilities
 - American Red Cross (city/county/State locations)
 - Community Centers (city/county)
 - National Guard Center
 - Medical Emergency Information Hotline
 - Offices of Emergency Services (city/county/State)
 - Security Services (Alarm & Guard Companies)
 - Transportation Services (airport/taxi/car rental/armored car services)
 - City/County Offices (administration/unions/building inspector/hazardous materials/health department/health & safety inspector/mental health/public information & works/schools/transportation)
 - Federal Offices (USDA Operations Center and partners, and as applicable: FBI, CDC hotline, Local Human Pandemic Coordinator, and Mission Area Human Pandemic Action Officer)
 - Utilities (electric/gas & oil/sanitation & sewer/telephone/water)

- Contractors and vendors (e.g., building and reconstruction/ electrical/glass/ grounds keeping/facilities/custodial/plumbing/locksmith and safe/office supplies and forms).

STAGE 3: Widespread outbreaks in multiple locations overseas – Human Pandemic Period

There is no way to forecast where the human pandemic will originate. If the first widespread cases of human-to-human transmission occur in the United States, this stage will be by-passed and any actions will have to be performed as rapidly as possible in stages 4 or 5. If the first cases occur overseas, most models and literature indicates that it will likely arrive in the United States within 4 to 6 weeks. Facilities managers should consider the following and keep the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator informed:

- Prioritize the work/work areas. Consider eliminating or decreasing levels of effort such as:
 - Policing the outside areas.
 - Buffing the floors.
 - Cleaning individual offices (would become an individual responsibility)
- Focus on places where people are touching things (computers, phones, door knobs, etc.) and keep them clean.
- There are no special cleaning requirements for offices vacated by sick personnel other than ensuring that the offices are not occupied for at least 12 hours.
- Focus cleaning on bathrooms, kitchens, and other places where moisture exists that can support viruses.
- Provide **monthly**, or more frequent if requested, Facility Status reports to Local Human Pandemic Coordinator, for mission critical facilities, and include status of:
 - Operational status (systems and structure).
 - Facility staffing status (e.g., staffing level and health issues).
 - Suppliers (adequate, insufficient, problems).
 - Emergency problems.
 - Public infrastructure status (e.g., utilities, phones, etc.).
 - Local public/support services (problems).
- Increase frequency of facility/staff and mission status reports to **biweekly**.

- Educate employees/visitors—put up posters throughout the facility (corridors, doorways, elevators) that show how to conduct business safely in the building.
- Refresh the plans on reducing the number of people working together: consider shift work or telework for facilities staff.
- Review work from home implementation for facilities staff.
- Reduce face-to-face meetings where possible—use teleconference calls or video teleconferences.
- Draft schedule for shift work for other than normal times (to reduce people-people contact, i.e., the workforce operates over a 24-hour period, instead, for example, of all working from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) to correspond with the needs of the Mission Area or staff offices.
- Review preparatory implementation plans for selective closures in facilities, such as cafeterias, meeting rooms, large assembly places, day care centers, fitness centers, and auditoriums.

STAGE 4: First human case in North America

The relevance of this stage is partially dependent on where the first cases appear. If it occurs in your area, you are essentially in stage 5. The pace at which the human pandemic spreads is dependent to some degree on where it first occurs. If it happens in an area that is a major transportation hub, it will likely spread rapidly. Conversely, if it happens in an isolated rural area, you may have a little more planning time. However, the dynamics of the Spanish Flu pandemic suggests that once it occurs within the United States, it is likely to spread across the country within 1 month. Facilities managers should consider the following and keep the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator informed

- Increase frequency of facility/staff and mission status reports to **daily**.
- Issue letters to employees/occupants advising them of personal issues, such as alternative day care for children and safety measures, such as social distancing, for the workplace.
- Close assembly and common areas to minimize contacts among employees/visitors.
- Close the cafeteria.
- If practical, set up hand wash/sanitizing stations at all entrances to the facility and food service areas.

- Issue guidance on the use of masks to cover the nose and mouth (primary places of entry for viruses). Masks may be effective at preventing the spread of disease.
- Issue guidance on the use of gloves (for special operations such as guard force, receptionists, janitorial service, mail handlers, etc.). In general, use gloves for handling material previously handled by other people.

STAGE 5: Spread throughout the United States.

A human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities. Facilities managers should consider the following and keep the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator informed:

- Provide support for employees working from home or teleworking.
- Implement shift schedules if authorized in your plan.
- Remind critical employees to use masks according to facility guidance.
- Remind critical employees to use gloves according to facility guidance.
- Permanently secure internal building doors, other than those under fire management, in the open position (to preclude touching the doorknobs) for common areas such as lobbies, conference rooms, rest room, and other high-use areas.

STAGE 6: Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves

A human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave. Facilities managers should consider the following and keep the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator informed:

- Employees should follow general and specific emergency guidance addressing employee and customer safety first.
- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Temporarily close and secure the facility, if necessary.
- Contact appropriate emergency services, if necessary.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic and actions taken; secure all properties and records.

- Field facility manager should contact the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator who in turn will contact respective intermediate Mission Area Human Pandemic Action Officers who in turn will contact the USDA Human Pandemic Coordinator with a Damage Assessments and Actions Taken Report; and act on instructions received.
- In the absence of higher level guidance, the field facility manager is authorized to initiate reasonable and prudent responses necessary to resume/continue operations at his/her facility.

Appendix E

COMMUNICATIONS WITH EMPLOYEES AND STAKEHOLDERS

1. PURPOSE

This checklist has been prepared for Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Coordinators and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators as an aid in helping to define the vertical and horizontal communications that will be required during a human pandemic.

2. COMMUNICATION METHODS AVAILABLE DURING HUMAN PANDEMICS

Type	Definition	Pandemic Period Recommended Use
Telephone Systems		
Home Telephone Service	Basic home telephone service to receive and send calls.	(Stages 0-6)
Cellular Telephones	Basic cellular service in local and nationwide calling network.	(Stages 0-6)
Telephone Notification Cascade (Phone Tree)	Pre-planned list of employees arranged by office to exercise their call up.	(Stages 0-6)
Automated Telephonic Emergency Notifications Systems	Automated system that sends an emergency announcement message activating an emergency plan or providing emergency messages to Agency users office, home and cell phones, e-mail systems, and PDA devices.	(Stages 0-6) Provides immediate notification to Agency employees and emergency staff loaded on the system. System can be programmed to transmit daily updates in Pandemic Status if necessary. Also facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period.
Text Messaging	Basic cell phone text messaging service to send and receive short digital text messages on cell phones and personal data assistants (PDA) devices.	(Stages 3-6) Good means of backup communications by personnel with cell phone text messaging.
Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)	Type of phone system that transmits voice and data over phone system.	Stages 3-6
Teleconferencing	Process of communicating with several personnel via one telephone line.	(Stages 3-6) Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period.
1-800 Hotline Information Number	Toll-free nationwide telephone number that employees can use to hear current Pandemic Alert status of Agency or to leave a message as to their status.	(Stages 3-6) Good method to keep employees informed of current Pandemic Status. Heavy use expected during Stages 3-6.

Type	Definition	Pandemic Period Recommended Use
Government Emergency Telephone Cards (GETS)	<p>Telephone priority calling system developed by the National Communications System (NCS). It allows personnel to increase their calls priority during an emergency by inserting a “PIN” number.</p> <p>For additional information on this NCS capability log onto www.ncs.gov.</p> <p>GETS User Assistance Numbers: 800-818-GETS (800-818-4387) or 703-818-GETS</p>	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Provides priority calling for Agency Leadership to stay in contact during the Pandemic Period when communication systems may be overloaded.</p>
Information Technology (IT)-Based Systems		
Web Sites	<p>Department and Agency Internet and Intranet web sites with critical Department information in a variety of areas.</p> <p>Consult http://www.pandemicflu.gov/ for useful national information on Pandemic Influenza and http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/ for USDA-specific information.</p>	<p>(Stages 0-6)</p> <p>Can be used during all Pandemic Periods</p>
Teleworking via Virtual Private Network (VPN)	Method used to communicate via either high-speeded dial-up, DSL, or broadband cable over high speed Internet from home or office.	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
PDA Devices	Handheld Personal Data Assistant (PDA) device used to send and receive e-mail messages and do limited word processing.	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Instant Messaging	Internet-based instant text messaging system that facilitates online dialogue between users.	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Video Teleconferencing	IT-based system that allows transmission of live full motion images between PCs or VTC centers.	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Wireless PC/LAN Systems, WiFi and Broadband Systems	Allows PC connectivity for users without the use of cable connectivity thus allowing users to spread out in a facility. Also expedites installation time for PC systems.	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Facilitates social distancing of employees during Pandemic Period</p>
Public Address System	An electronic amplification system used as a communication system in public areas.	<p>(Stages 3-6)</p> <p>Good method to keep employees informed of current Pandemic Status.</p>
Media-Based Systems		
News Media Releases (print, television, radio)	Local news media coverage of an event with possible live remotes being conducted at Agency facilities.	<p>(Stages 0-6)</p> <p>Good method to use to keep employees informed at home.</p>
Internal Television Networks	Internally controlled television channel upon which emergency messages or live remotes may be shown.	<p>(Stages 0-6)</p> <p>Can be used during all Pandemic Periods</p>

NOTE: The above list contains a number of highly technical telephone and IT-based communication systems in use today; however, not all employees in an Agency will have the listed communication and IT system capability. Most will have basic office and home telephone and cell phone service. Primary means of emergency notification may be through Emergency Telephone Notification Cascades “Phone Tree.” Managers at all levels need to be aware of this and plan accordingly to transmit emergency information as quickly as possible and to assist employees during all human pandemic stages. Section 508 requirements apply to assure that employees who are hearing or vision impaired have access to electronic information.

3. COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Managers and employees must work together to ensure necessary contact numbers and means of communications are available during a human pandemic period. The contact numbers can be contained in any form from an Office “Phone Tree” to a USDA-wide Automated Emergency Notification System that sends out a broadcast message to thousands of personnel with multiple types of communications systems. The method is not as important as having the correct information of the person being contacted.

A key factor in maintaining operations during a human pandemic is the ability of an organization to maintain proper “social distancing” during a human pandemic incident. To do this, an Agency must have the capability to use the above listed Communication System Methods to stay in contact with their employees and keep their Agency operating during a human pandemic emergency.

Mission Area/Staff Office Human Pandemic Action Officers and Local Human Pandemic Coordinators are encouraged to use the USDA Target Center (202-720-2600) as a resource for communication tools for persons with disabilities. The Target Center web site at <http://www.usda.gov/oo/target/> will be updated to include current information.

STAGES 0/1/2: Human Pandemic Alert Period - Planning and Readiness

The following checklist provides guidance managers should consider regarding their communications capability preparations to respond to a human pandemic period during the Stages 0-2.

- Update employee information including all forms of home contact—home cell, home e-mail.
- Establish emergency communications plans and revise them periodically. Plans should include identification of key contacts (with backups), chain of communications (including suppliers and customers), and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.
- Evaluate if employees have the telephone and IT equipment necessary to work from remote/home locations.

- Ensure Agency PDA devices are updated with the latest contact information. This update is very important for the Senior Leadership communications devices.
- Plan for the activation of telework and shiftwork for facility staff.
- Consult <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> for useful information on human pandemic and <http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/> for USDA employee information, including human pandemic influenza.
- Develop strategies if telephones are overloaded to contact employees (i.e., text messaging, VoIP, TTY, and instant messaging).
- Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.
- Disseminate information to employees about your human pandemic preparedness and response plan.
- Develop platforms (e.g., hotlines, dedicated Web sites) for communicating human pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way. Include redundancies in the emergency contact system.
- Identify community sources for timely and accurate human pandemic information (domestic and international) and resources for obtaining countermeasures (e.g., vaccines and antivirals). Pass this information to employees who may be ill at home or have ill family members.
- Provide guidance to employees in the preparation of Family Communications Plans. Family Communication plans should include such information as names, dates of birth, social security numbers, important medical information, out-of-town contacts and e-mails, school and work address and evacuation locations, and where to meet in an emergency. In addition you should list contact information for doctors and pharmacists and medical insurance information.
- Encourage employees to log onto the Department of Homeland Security web site (www.ready.gov) to give them samples and templates for the development of Family Communications Plans.
- Working with your Public Affairs Office, set up preplanned procedures for local radio and television stations to receive and air Department/Agency work status to the general public.

Pandemic Period (Stages 3-6)

STAGE 3: Widespread outbreaks in multiple locations overseas –

Human Pandemic Period

There is no way to forecast where the human pandemic will originate. If the first widespread cases of human to human transmission occur in the United States, this stage will be by-passed and any actions will have to be performed as rapidly as possible in stages 4 or 5. If the first cases occur overseas, most models and literature indicates that it will likely arrive in the United States within 4 to 6 weeks.

The following checklist provides guidance managers should consider regarding their communications capability during the human pandemic stages 3-6.

- Initiate emergency notifications to make contact with employees and test communications systems.
- Take personnel accountability to ensure the location of each employee is captured in case it becomes necessary to contact them.
- Identify employees who do not have home e-mail service and tailor their update messages to telephone broadcast messages they can receive on a voice mail system.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.

STAGE 4: First human to human case in North America

The relevance of this stage is partially dependent on where the first cases appear. If it occurs in your area, you are essentially in stage 5. The pace at which the human pandemic spreads is dependent to some degree on where it first occurs. If it happens in an area that is a major transportation hub, it will likely spread rapidly. Conversely, if it happens in an isolated rural area, you may have a little more planning time. However, the dynamics of the Spanish Flu pandemic suggests that once it occurs within the United States, it is likely to spread across the country within 1 month.

- Take personnel accountability to ensure the location of each employee is captured in case it becomes necessary to contact them.
- Disseminate regular human pandemic status updates so employees know the frequency of the update and where to go to find information on the latest update.
- Identify employees who do not have home e-mail service and tailor their update messages to telephone broadcast messages they can receive on a voice mail system.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.

STAGE 5: Spread throughout United States

The human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local government and health authorities.

- Disseminate regular human pandemic status updates so employees know the frequency of the update and where to go to find information on the latest update.
- Don't hold meetings (with people in close proximity)—use teleconference calls or video conferences) with major department heads and Agency Leadership to discuss communications plans.
- Reduce number of people working together—use shiftwork or telework.
- Work from home, if authorized.
- Use shiftwork for other than normal times to spread out people contact time (i.e., the workforce operates over a 24-hour period, instead of all together from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).
- If a manager is operating a Response Cell or Emergency Operations Center (EOC), ensure you rotate personnel out so they have time to be with their families and take care of family business.
- Identify employees who do not have home e-mail service and tailor their update messages to telephone broadcast messages they can receive on a voice mail system.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.
- Ensure dissemination of work-related time and attendance status (i.e., such as placing personnel on Administrative Leave or Standby status).
- Use cell phone text messaging and internet instant messaging to conduct meetings and disseminate information to employees and Senior Staff.

STAGE 6: Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves

The human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave.

- Ensure IT departments post the regular update to Agency Web sites (internet and intranet) in a timely manner. Check the <http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/> for all the latest updates.
- Request employees to inform you if they plan to temporarily move to other parts of the country.

- If a manager is operating a Response Cell or Emergency Operations Center (EOC), ensure you rotate personnel out so they have time to be with their families and take care of family business.
- Identify employees who do not have home e-mail service and tailor their update messages to telephone broadcast messages they can receive on a voice mail system.
- Encourage use of your Agency 1-800 Hotline Service and the USDA Hotline # 1-800-932-1902.

4. COMMUNICATION TRAINING CHECKLIST

The success or failure of an Agency's ability for Agency managers to communicate with their employees and for employees to stay in contact with the Agency hinges on the amount of training conducted on the emergency communications systems. Managers cannot wait until the day of the emergency to train and test communications capability. Employees should continually update their contact information for their offices to ensure the managers have their correct contact information. This will ensure a rapid and accurate emergency communications capability.

The following communications training checklist items provide guidance that managers and employees should consider in conducting effective and useful training in preparation for the Pandemic Period (Stages 0-6).

- Conduct quarterly Agency Emergency Telephonic Notification Tests during duty and non-duty hours to test the ability of the Agency to contact all employees. Record the results of the number of personnel contacted, by what method, and time it took to contact them.
- Train employees to update their contact information with their supervisors. Ensure all supervisors can contact their employees.
- Plan for the activation of telework and shiftwork for facility staff.
 - Incorporate use of telework into the way your Agency does business by allowing authorized employees to telework from their homes or telecommuting facilities.
 - Ensure employees have correct telework log in user IDs and password credentials to access Agency IT systems. Work with your IT department to publish easy to use telework user instructions.
 - Work with your IT departments to ensure "teleworkers" have the proper hardware and software home PC system configurations to use telework.
 - Ensure the IT department has planned for the correct system capacity to accept numerous telework log-ons.
- Start education of staff in social distancing practices. See Appendix B for social distancing planning guidance.

- Conduct quarterly “All-Hands” Agency Communications Training “New Technology” classes that will teach employees and emergency staff how to stay in touch with the Agency via the listed systems in Section I of this checklist.

ANNEX A

USDA SUPPORT OF A BROAD FEDERAL RESPONSE

1. PURPOSE

This Annex is intended for local Human Pandemic Coordinators who may be called upon to support a response to the *National Response Plan* (NRP). USDA is required to support the implementation of National-level plans such as the NRP, including support during a human pandemic when offices at all levels are struggling to maintain their normal functions.

This Annex provides a brief overview of USDA's responsibilities in the NRP. The NRP is published by the Department of Homeland Security and may be found at http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/NRP_FullText.pdf. A brief overview of USDA primary and support *NRP* responsibilities is presented at Tab A.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (Outlined in Stages)

STAGE 0/1/2: Human Pandemic Alert Period - Planning and Readiness

- Review your office responsibilities and actions required to support the NRP or other National-level Plans. See Tab A as a starting point.
- Review with key personnel the scope of actions that your office has been involved in, in past occurrences when a national level plan was activated.
- Identify personnel, other resources, and skill sets that must be maintained to provide support to the NRP.
- Develop a standing list of personnel who could serve as an ancillary workforce to continue essential functions if key personnel or deployed in support of the NRP, or conversely an ancillary workforce to deploy or function in support of the NRP. Consider contractors, employees in other job titles/descriptions, and retirees.
- Develop a training plan to ensure ancillary work force can perform functions assigned. Consider Incident Command System training available on line through AGLearn.
- Develop and plan for scenarios likely to have an adverse effect on capabilities to provide support to the NRP during a human pandemic.

- Develop a communications plan tailored to support the NRP. This should include communications with the ancillary work force and entities that you expect to interact with in support of the NRP.
- Develop and implement exercises/drills to test local human pandemic response plans and procedures; and, based on the results, periodically revise the plans/procedures.

STAGE 3: Widespread human outbreak in multiple locations overseas –

Human Pandemic Period

There is no way to forecast where the human pandemic will originate. If the first widespread cases of human to human transmission occur in the United States this stage will be by-passed and any actions will have to be performed as rapidly as possible in stages 4 or 5. If the first cases occur overseas, most models and literature indicates that it will likely arrive within the United States within 4 to 6 weeks.

- Reconfirm availability of ancillary work force and update telephone numbers.
- Complete or conduct refresher training on NRP responsibilities.
- Re-verify contact points in communications plan.

STAGE 4: First human to human case in North America

The relevance of this stage is partially dependent on where the first cases appear. If it occurs in your area, you are essentially in stage 5. The pace at which the human pandemic spreads is dependent to some degree on where it first occurs. If it happens in an area that is a major transportation hub, it will likely spread rapidly. Conversely, if it happens in an isolated rural area, you may have a little more planning time. However, the dynamics of the Spanish Flu pandemic suggests that once it occurs within the United States, it is likely to spread across the country within 1 month.

- Update personnel on the status of the human pandemic. Note that the USDA web site <http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared> will have daily updates on the spread of the influenza and guidance from USDA Headquarters.
- The Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Homeland Security will have the lead on implementation of the NRP.

STAGE 5: Spread throughout the United States

The human pandemic will not necessarily affect all parts of the country equally or at the same time. Offices should take their lead from local health authorities.

- Execute response to the NRP if and when directed.
- Coordinate with State, local, and private sector entities, as necessary, the re-distribution or reassignment of specified mission-related resources (e.g., reallocation of equipment and supplies from the National Interagency Cache System relative to support of firefighting or priority ESF #9, Urban Search and Rescue, efforts).
- Disseminate information to employees about local human pandemic preparedness and response plans and procedures – including deviations as necessary from normal operating procedures.
- Implement procedures for each operating location to prepare and disseminate reports addressing status of *NRP* mission operations and personnel, including modifications necessitated due to the human pandemic.
- Collaborate with State, local, and tribal entities to track the status of the human pandemic and to be apprised of any modifications to their *NRP* mission-related capabilities and plans.
- Keep key leadership apprised of any impediments to being able to perform the NRP support mission.
- Maintain list of lessons learned for evaluation in Stage 6.

STAGE 6: Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves

The human pandemic will likely come in waves. This stage focuses on evaluating capabilities to continue to perform your functions and preparing for the next wave.

- Assess any injury/illness to employees (and customers), and damage to facilities.
- Begin documenting the effects of the human pandemic and actions taken; secure all properties and records.
- Field Facility Manager should contact the Local Human Pandemic Coordinator who in turn will contact respective intermediate District/Agency Pandemic Influenza Coordinators who in turn will contact the USDA Pandemic Coordinator with a Damage Assessments and Actions Taken Report; and act on instructions received.

- In the absence of higher level guidance, the Field Facility Manager is authorized to initiate reasonable and prudent responses necessary to continue operations at his/her facility.
- Commence hiring actions to backfill personnel lost in the human pandemic.
- Conduct training as required.
- Replace assets consumed in support of the NRP.

USDA Support of the *National Response Plan (NRP)*

A brief overview of USDA primary and support responsibilities under the *NRP* is presented in the following three charts.

For the full plan, visit http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/NRP_FullText.pdf.

USDA Responsibilities as Primary Agency

Emergency Support Function	Scope	Support Agencies
ESF #11 Agriculture and Natural Resources [Other primary agency: DOI—for natural and cultural resources and historic properties protection and restoration.]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of nutrition assistance. Includes determining nutrition assistance needs; obtaining appropriate food supplies; arranging for the delivery of the supplies; and authorizing disaster food stamps. ▪ Animal and plant disease and pest response. Includes implementing an integrated Federal, State, local, and tribal response to an outbreak of a highly contagious or economically devastating animal/zoonotic disease; an outbreak of a highly infective exotic plant disease; or an economically devastating plant pest infestation. Ensures, in coordination with ESF #8, Public Health and Medical Services, that animal/veterinary/wildlife issues in natural disasters are supported. ▪ Assurance of the safety and security of the commercial food supply. Includes the inspection and verification of food safety aspects of slaughter and processing plants, products in distribution and retail sites; and import facilities at ports of entry; laboratory analysis of food samples; control of products suspected to be adulterated; plant closures; foodborne disease surveillance; and field investigations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC ▪ DoD ▪ DOE ▪ HHS ▪ DHS ▪ DOJ ▪ DOS ▪ DOL ▪ DOT ▪ EPA ▪ GSA ▪ USPS ▪ American Red Cross
ESF #14 Long-Term Community Recovery and Mitigation [Other primary agencies: DOC; HUD; Treasury; SBA; and DHS (also ESF Coordinator)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activated for large-scale or catastrophic incidents that require Federal assistance to address significant long-term impacts in the affected area (e.g., impacts on housing, businesses and employment, community infrastructure, and social services) ▪ In the case of USDA, provide emergency loans for the agricultural sector, technical assistance for agricultural market recovery, rural housing, technical assistance for resource conservation, and technical and financial assistance for emergency watershed protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DoD ▪ DOE ▪ HHS ▪ DOI ▪ DOL ▪ DOT ▪ EPA ▪ TVA ▪ American Red Cross

USDA/Forest Service (FS) Responsibilities as Primary Agency

Emergency Support Function	Scope	Support Agencies
ESF #4 Firefighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable the detection and suppression of wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, an Incident of National Significance. ▪ Manage and coordinate firefighting activities, including the detection and suppression of fires on Federal lands, and provide personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of State, local, and tribal agencies involved in rural and urban firefighting operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DOC ▪ DoD ▪ DHS ▪ DOI ▪ EPA

USDA Responsibilities as a Support Agency

Emergency Support Function (ESF)	USDA, other than Forest Service	USDA/Forest Service
ESF #1 Transportation Primary Agency: DOT		X
ESF #2 Communications Primary Agency: DHS/NCS		X
ESF #3 Public Works and Engineering Primary Agencies: DoD/USACE; DHS/FEMA	X	X
ESF #5 Emergency Management Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA	X	X
ESF #6 Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services Primary Agencies: DHS/FEMA; American Red Cross	X	X
ESF #7 Resource Support Primary Agency: GSA		X
ESF #8 Public Health and Medical Services Primary Agency: HHS	X	X
ESF #9 Urban Search and Rescue Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA		X
ESF #10 Oil and Hazardous Materials Response Primary Agencies: EPA; DHS/USCG	X	X
ESF #12 Energy Primary Agency: DOE	X	X
ESF #13 Public Safety and Security Primary Agencies: DHS; DOJ		X
ESF #15 External Affairs Primary Agency: DHS/FEMA	X	

ANNEX C

TEST, TRAINING AND EXERCISE (TT&E) PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE

This appendix will guide users through testing, training, and exercising of local pandemic operation plans. Testing, training and exercises are essential to demonstrating, assessing and improving the ability of agencies to execute their pandemic plans. Training is the principle means by which personnel achieve a level of proficiency in performance of functions they are to perform. Tests and exercises serve to assess, validate or identify for subsequent correction, specific aspects of pandemic plans, policies, procedures, systems and facilities. The TT&E in pandemic planning should include robust testing of cross-trained employees regarding their ability to perform all critical functions identified for continuation during a pandemic or any other emergency event. To the extent that contractors are part of essential services, they should be included in your test, training, and exercise program.

2. FREQUENCY OF TT&E

The TT&E program outlined here is designed to help agencies and staff offices ensure all critical functions and services can be carried out during a pandemic event and is designed to be practiced in Stages 0-3. The frequency of testing in the Planning and Readiness stage (Stages 0-2) depends on the length of time your geographical area remains in this stage. In this Stage, a minimum of quarterly testing of each action is recommended. In Stage 3, agencies and staff offices should consider increasing the frequency of the Stages 0-2 test, training, and exercise program based on their mission essential functions and services. Conceivably, from Stage 4 on, although the event may not be happening in your specific area, you should be prepared to implement your plan immediately. The main emphasis in Stage 6 is preparation for subsequent waves.

3. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS (Outlined In Stages)

Stages 0/1/2: Human Pandemic Alert Period - Planning and Readiness

Essential Services

- After completing the pandemic plan, exercise your plan to ensure the proficiency of personnel to conduct essential functions and services. Keep a checklist of areas identified during the exercise that need improvement. (Reference Appendix C, Section 2).

- For seasonal essential functions and services, test the strategies for executing them in a pandemic environment beginning a minimum of *one month prior* to the start of each respective season. Adjust strategies as necessary to achieve readiness. (Reference Appendix B, Section 2).
- Determine the frequency at which the employees who have been cross-trained need to practice essential functions and services and have them actually perform the duties of the essential functions and services. Provide additional training where necessary to ensure performance of mission essential functions and services by all cross-trained employees.
- Periodically test the ability to access vital records electronically from remote locations. Correct failures and inefficiencies related to electronic access to vital records. Update hard copies as necessary. (Reference Appendix B, Section 3).
- Periodically test the critical IT systems that support connectivity internally and to key stakeholders. Focus testing on systems that are not used routinely in day-to-day operations. Correct failures or inefficiencies in the critical systems.
- Test the ability of newly appointed employees to conduct essential functions and services for which they have who have been trained. Provide additional training where necessary to ensure performance of mission essential functions and services by all cross-trained employees.
- Conduct outreach to local health authorities.

Communications Strategies

- Develop a communications call tree of both mission essential and non mission essential personnel. Verify personal information, to include addresses and telephone numbers, along with the availability of employees identified in delegations of authority and orders of succession. Immediately designate and train officials to replace those who are no longer able to conduct duties due to retirement, reassignment or other reasons. Ensure that replacement officials fulfill the goals of geographical dispersion. Disseminate the resulting updated delegation and succession information to local and headquarters staff as necessary. (Reference Appendix B, Section 2).
- Test contacting mission essential employees. Conduct tests during work hours and non-duty hours. Correct contact information including information for contacting electronic devices (pagers, PDA, Blackberry). (Reference Appendix C, Section 2)
- Test the employee tracking system for a minimum of a one week period. Agencies and staff offices should determine the scope of the test to ensure they are capable of monitoring

employee absences. Adjust tracking system as necessary to achieve reliable employee tracking. (Reference Appendix C, Section 2).

- Test the communications equipment required to perform essential functions and services.
- Test the procedures to report mission capable status of USDA facilities and the ability to perform essential functions and services.
- Survey and compile lists of employees who were infected in the first wave and recovered. Adjust three deep designations of essential employees based on employee health status.

Social Distancing

- Determine the frequency of testing social distancing techniques. Focus testing on those individuals who do not routinely telework and evaluate for; a) impacts on ability of employees to carry out essential functions and services, b) impacts on facilities, and c) impacts on telecommunication and Internet/Intranet systems. Make necessary adjustments and corrections to social distancing techniques and systems to ensure the ability to conduct essential functions and services in a social distancing environment. (Reference Appendix B, Section 2).
- Test the social distancing techniques by having newly appointed essential function and services employees conduct duties via telework for at least one day. Make necessary adjustments and corrections to ensure continued conduct of essential functions and services in a social distancing environment.
- Inventory hygiene supplies and conduct outreach to local health authorities.

Stage 3: Widespread outbreaks in multiple locations overseas- Human Pandemic Period

- Thoroughly review your plans and make adjustments as needed. Each agency should update their communications call tree, check supplies and equipment and be prepared to execute pandemic plans.

Stages 4/5: Spread throughout United States

- Execute human pandemic plans.

Stage 6 - Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves

The main emphasis in this stage is preparation for subsequent waves.

- Gather staff together and develop a list of what worked and didn't work. Contact key stakeholders and customers for their input. Adjust plans based on knowledge gained and lessons learned.
- Survey and compile lists of employees who were infected in the first wave and recovered. Adjust three deep designations of essential employees based on employee health status.